

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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FOLLOWING REPEAT LAHORE 368 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ISLAMABAD KARACHI
NEW DELHI DATED APR 13:

QTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 0368

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN PUNJAB DETERIORATES: FURTHER CRACKS
IN PPP APPEAR

REF: LAHORE 0354

1. SUMMARY: SECURITY SITUATION IN PUNJAB HAS WORSENEF FURTHER.
VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD AGAIN APRIL 12 IN LAHORE,
MULTAN, SIALKOT AND A NUMBER OF OTHER TOWNS AND CITIES IN
THE PROVINCE. DAMAGE TO PUBLIC PROPERTY -- BUSES, BANKS AND
POST OFFICES -- IS EXTENSIVE. ATTACKS AGAINST PPP OFFICES
AND WORKERS CONTINUE. PPP MEMBER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FROM
KASUR HAS RESIGNED IN PROTEST AGAINST GOVERNMENT, FIRST TO
TO DO SO. MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY HAS LEFT PARTY IN
LAHORE AND IT IS BELIEVED PPP GENERAL SECRETARY MUBASHIR
HASSAN HAS ALSO RESIGNED. FORMER GOVERNOR KHAR STATED IN
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PRESS INTERVIEW APRIL 12 THAT HE WILL TAKE FULL-FLEDGED PART
IN OPPOSITION STRUGGLE. CENTRAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE
OPPOSITION PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA) HAS ANNOUNCED
THAT FRIDAY, APRIL 15, WILL BE A SPECIAL DAY OF PROTEST ALL
OVER THE COUNTRY. PRO-JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI PUNJAV STUDENTS
COUNCIL MET IN LAHORE APRIL 12 AND DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE
FULLY IN PNA MOVEMENT. OUTLOOK FOR BHUTTO APPEARS TO BE

ALL DOWNHILL. END SUMMARY.

2. VIOLENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD AGAIN IN VARIOUS PARTS OF PUNJAB ON APRIL 12. MOST SERIOUS SITUATION OCCURRED IN LAHORE WHERE 34 POLICE WERE INJURED IN CLASH WITH PRO-OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATORS. EIGHTEEN WERE INJURED BY A BOMB THROWN AT THEM OUTSIDE A POLICE STATION. DESPITE TEAR GASSING AND LATHI CHARGES, POLICE HAD TO OPEN FIRE ON CIRCULAR ROAD TO DISPERSE A VIOLENT CROWD AFTER HEAVY BRICKBATTING. RIOTERS SET FIRE TO THREE BANKS AND THE NATIONAL SAVINGS CENTER. A POST OFFICE ON RAVI ROAD WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND. PPP OFFICE IN SAMNABAD MAIN MARKET WAS ALSO ATTACKED AND SET ON FIRE. ANOTHER BANK BRANCH NEARBY WAS STONED BY DEMONSTRATORS, AS WERE OFFICES OF PRO-GOVERNMENT PAKISTAN TIMES AND URDU DAILY IMROZE. DEMONSTRATORS AT VARIOUS POINTS IN CITY SET FIRE TO TIRES IN MIDDLE OF SEVERAL STREETS AND BLOCKED TRAFFIC. MAIN MARKETS OF LAHORE REMAIN CLOSED AND VARIOUS TRADERS HAVE PLACED NOTICES IN PRESS THAT THEY WILL OBSERVE HARTAL UNTIL GOVERNMENT ACCEDES TO OPPOSITION DEMANDS. LAWYERS BOYCOTTED COURTS, APPEARING ONLY IN POLITICAL CASES. MORE ARRESTS WERE MADE, BUT NO OFFICIAL FIGURES HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

3. VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN PPP AND PNA SUPPORTERS ERUPTED AGAIN IN MULTAN, WHERE SITUATION IS APPROACHING MINI CIVIL WAR. SEVERAL WERE INJURED IN SHOOTINGS AND HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PRESS, GROUP LED BY LOCAL PPP LEADER MOHAMMAD ASHIQ FIRED ON PNA PROCESSION WITH RIFLES AND STEN GUNS, WOUNDING MANY OPPOSITION WORKERS. MULTAN DISTRICT BAR ASSOCIATION CONDEMNED POLICE FIRINGS AND URGED PEOPLE NOT TO PAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TAXES. COMPLETE HARTAL WAS OBSERVED. IN SIALKOT, PRO-OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATORS ATTACKED AND DAMAGED FIVE OFFICES OF THE HABIB BANK, TRIED TO SET FIRE TO A PPP SENATOR'S CAR, AND HURLED STONES AT HOUSE OF A PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER. PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOOK OUT PROCESSION DEMANDING OPENING OF SCHOOLS. HARTALS WERE IMPOSED IN JHANG AND DERA GHAZI KHAN. PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS WERE TAKEN OUT IN A NUMBER OF OTHER CITIES INCLUDING LYALLPUR, WHERE PNA WORKERS COURTED ARREST.

4. PPP IN PUNJAB IS BEGINNING TO CRACK UNDER PRESSURE OF OPPOSITION MOVEMENT. SARDAR AHMAD ALI, MNA FROM KASUR, RESIGNED FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APRIL 12 IN PROTEST AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. ALI CALLED FOR PRIME MINISTER'S RESIGNATION AND FRESH ELECTIONS TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. CONGEN RECEIVED NEWS AFTERNOON OF APRIL 13 THAT ABDUL HAFEEZ KARDAR, PPP MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY FROM LAHORE, HAS RESIGNED. MUBASHIR HASSAN, PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY, IS ALSO BELIEVED TO HAVE RESIGNED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT OTHER RESIGNATIONS WILL FOLLOW WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. QUESTION OF MAINTAINING UNITY MAY SOON BECOME A GREATER PROBLEM FOR THE PPP THAN FOR OPPOSITION.

5. FORMER PUNJAB GOVERNOR MUSTAFA KHAR HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL PARTICIPATE FULLY IN OPPOSITION POLITICS. IN SPECIAL PRESS INTERVIEW APRIL 12, KHAR SAID HE HAD PREVIOUSLY KEPT SILENT BECAUSE HE FEARED FOR THE LIVES OF HIS FRIENDS, PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS IFTIKHAR AHMAD TARI AND CHAUDHRY MOHAMMAD IRSHAD AND OTHER WHOM HE ALLEGED WERE KIDNAPPED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING HIS UNSUCCESSFUL BY-ELECTION ATTEMPT IN OCTOBER 1975. HE CLAIMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD PROMISED TO FREE THEM IF HE STAYED ABROAD DURING THE RECENT GENERAL ELECTIONS, WHICH HE DID. KHAR SAID THEY HAVE RENEGED ON THEIR PROMISE AND SO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED NOW THAT HIS SILENCE CAN NO LONGER GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF TARI AND THE OTHERS.

6. CENTRAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE PNA MET IN LAHORE APRIL 12 AND CALLED FOR MASSIVE COUNTRYWIDE PROTESTS FRIDAY, APRIL 15. BIG PROCESSIONS WILL BE TAKEN OUT FROM MOSQUES, FOLLOWING RECITATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF HOLY QURAN TO PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THOSE KILLED IN CURRENT MOVEMENT AGAINST GOVERNMENT. PAKISTANIS LIVING ABROAD HAVE ALSO BEEN REQUESTED TO PROTEST AGAINST GOVERNMENT SAME DAY. PNA PUNJAB CHIEF MOHAMMAD HAMZA ENDORSED CALL AND URGED PEOPLE TO CONTINUE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES.

7. PRO-JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI STUDENTS COUNCIL MET IN LAHORE APRIL 12 AND DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN PNA MOVEMENT. STUDENTS AGREED TO OBSERVE APRIL 15 AS SPECIAL DAY OF PROTEST IN SUPPORT OF OPPOSITION DEMANDS.

8. GROWING STRENGTH AND DEFECTIONS FROM HIS OWN PARTY INDICATES THAT BHUTTO IS NOW ON SLIPPERY SLOPE, AND NOT MUCH TIME MAY BE LEFT. GAMON UNQTE
VANCE

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